

**REMARKS**

Claims 7-9 are the only pending claims in this application. Claims 7 and 9 have been amended to more clearly define Applicants' invention.

Independent Claim 7, as amended, is to a wire harness loosening jig in combination with a wire harness that has a base plate, a fixing-side clamping portion attached to one end of the base plate having a first pair of clamps for clamping one end of a wire harness, and a guide rail attached to the base plate extending in a longitudinal direction of the wire harness, when the wire harness is arranged in the wire harness loosening jig for loosening. A moveable-side clamping portion is provided that is slidably arranged with the guide rail and has a second pair of clamps for clamping the other end of the wire harness. Clampers are arranged to shift one of the first pair of clamps and one of the second pair of clamps in a radial direction of the wire harness to clamp the wire harness, so that when the movable-side clamping portion is moved towards the fixing-side clamping portion, the wire harness is compressed and wires disposed therein are loosened. Independent Claim 9 is a similar arrangement where a specific driving mechanism is provided. Such arrangements are not taught or suggested in the references cited.

In the previous amendment, it was stated that the fixing-side clamping portion and the guide rails are each on the base plate, which differentiates from Helm. The Office Action now argues that the word "on" can indicate proximity, rather a close proximity, to the base plate, and that Helm satisfies this relationship.

Applicants had meant "on" to mean "attached to or unified with" and discussed that at the interview of October 8, 2002. To clarify the matter, Applicants have changed "on" to read "attached to one end of" relative to the fixing-side clamping portion and guide rails. Claims 7 and 9 have been so amended. This should remove the question relative to the earlier meaning of "on" in the claims. The Examiner is referred to the drawings, particularly Figure 15, and to the specification at page 11, lines 6-10, for support for this amendment.

In addition, the Office Action continues to consider 22 of the Helm reference to be a base plate. Applicants would emphasize that 22 of Helm is a support frame that includes upright rigid members 26 that are connected to each other by a plurality of rigid horizontal members 28 (see Col. 3, lines 19-24 of Helm). The definition of "plate" is a "thin, flat sheet or piece of metal or other material." The Helm reference does not teach such a structure.

In the present invention, the fixing-side clamping portion 3 is attached to one end of the base plate 2 and the guide rail 4 is attached to the base plate 2, an arrangement that is impossible in Helm because no base plate is present, but rather an open framework of a support frame. The claims have been amended to point out this distinction.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, claims 7 - 9, as amended, are believed to be patentable and in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosure: Petition for Extension of Time